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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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1. Attack on Professor Sternhell
2. Iran

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Key stories in the media:  
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The Jerusalem Post reported that the chances of new Kadima leader Tzipi Livni quickly forming a coalition took a hit on Thursday when talks broke down in a secret channel that had been formed between

Livni and Labor Party Chairman Ehud Barak.

All media, except the religious press, highlighted yesterday's attack against Prof. Zeev Sternhell. Media quoted FM Tzipi Livni as saying that this is an intolerable event that cannot be hushed, and Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu that the attack was revolting. Ha'aretz and other media reported that Internal Security Minister Avi Dichter called the incident a "nationalist terror attack apparently perpetrated by Jews" and was quoted as saying that the police would not rest until "those terrorists" were behind bars. Israel Radio reported that French FM Bernard Kouchner condemned the attack. The media reported that the far Right groups would not condemn the assault.

The Jerusalem Post and Israel Radio reported that yesterday PA President Mahmoud Abbas met with President Bush at the White House. The two expressed their hopes regarding the continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The radio reported that the UN Security Council will discuss the settlements and that the Quartet will debate the negotiations. The Jerusalem Post reported that Russia will take part in the Quartet meeting, despite tensions with the West which led to Moscow's decision this week not to participate in high-level talks on Iran.

Ha'aretz reported on the rehabilitation of Mossad under Director Meir Dagan in Israel's fight against Iran and Hizbullah. The Jerusalem Post cited the belief of EU diplomatic sources who specialize in the Middle East that Israel cannot stop the Iranian nuclear program on its own using military means. The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday an interministerial committee presented Olmert with a list of 450 names of Palestinian prisoners to be released in exchange for Gilad Shalit, in a move immediately dismissed by Hamas as insufficient. Ha'aretz reported that Shalit is being held hostage by the PA unity deal. Yediot and other media reported that 20 Israeli writers and poets, including David Grossman, A. B. Yehoshua, and Amos Oz, have written PM Ehud Olmert that everything must be done so that Gilad's fate will not be similar to that of MIA Ron Arad.

Media reported that in New York President Shimon Peres met with Republican presidential candidate Sen. John McCain and his running mate Gov. Sarah Palin. Yediot reported that Peres complained to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon about the honorable reception given on the international scene to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Israel Radio quoted Shaul Mofaz as saying that he is staying in Kadima and that he will resume his duties as transportation minister on the agreed date. He would not, however announce his return to the party leadership.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe quoted Livni associates as saying that negotiations with Syria will be frozen.

The Jerusalem Post reported that a team of officers from the Pentagon's F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program was in Israel this week for talks with the IAF aimed at finalizing details regarding Israeli plans to officially purchase the stealth fighter-jet next year.

Leading media reported that, warning about a non-conventional attack against Israel, Defense Minister Ehud Barak has approved a new plan under which all "secure rooms" built after 2009 will need to be fitted with chemical and biological filters.

Ha'aretz reported that Israel and Azerbaijan have signed a weapons deal worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

Leading media reported on an impending crisis surrounding the 2009 state budget: Labor wants a 2.5% increase, whereas Livni is in favor of a 1.7% increase. Maariv quoted a senior Labor official as saying that his party is not adamant about this.

Yediot reported that the U.S. Embassy in Israel has refused to grant a non-immigrant visa to a Jewish woman from Iran whose brothers live in the States. The newspaper quoted the Embassy's response that visitors from third countries find it hard to prove their eligibility for a visa, and that there are other embassies in which staff speak Persian and that are better suited to judge the eligibility of Iranian applicants. Yediot also reported that

Interior Minister Meir Sheetrit has embarked on a campaign to help Israelis enter the U.S. without the need for visas.

All secular media underscored the concert given last night by Sir Paul McCartney in Tel Aviv. The event was attended by 50,000 Israelis.

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I1. Attack on Professor Sternhell:  
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Summary:  
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The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "Leniency toward violence is tantamount to cooperation with the [Jewish] terrorists."

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote on page one of the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "All [Professor Zeev Sternhell] does is give expression in writing to fairly prevalent views among the Israeli public, including the highest ranks of government. If he is a target, then almost anyone who does not think like an extreme right winger could be a target."

Prominent liberal author A. B. Yehoshua wrote on page one of the popular, pluralist Maariv: "The problem is more with the relatively moderate settlers who live in the dozens of settlements, who certainly reject such acts, but do not come out particularly strongly against them and do not condemn the extremists in their community."

The nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe editorialized: "[The perpetrators'] act is worthy of universal condemnation. It endangers Israeli society and harms those trying to fight a legitimate battle against radical left-wing organizations."

Block Quotes:  
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II. "From Denunciations to Deeds"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (9/26): "The pamphlets offering a large reward to anyone who murders Peace Now activists and calling for a state based on Jewish religious law in the West Bank remove all doubt about the identity of the terrorists who tried to murder Prof. Zeev Sternhell. This internationally renowned expert on fascist movements in Europe, a Holocaust survivor whose entire family was murdered by the Nazis, was not another victim of some 'wild weed,' but of Jewish fascism itself, which continues to extend its roots. The criminals who set the pipe bomb outside Sternhell's home come from the same 'garden' as ... Yigal Amir, the murderer of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin.... Human rights activists have for some time been reporting the security forces' failure to deal with the extreme right's systematic violations of the law.... Our well-guarded ministers cannot make do with lip service to democracy and freedom of expression. They must order the security forces to treat Jewish terrorism as harshly as they treat Palestinian terrorism. The Attorney General must instruct the State Prosecutor's Office to demand that the courts impose severe penalties on Jewish transgressors. Yesterday, they aimed their weapons at Palestinian farmers. Today, they are murdering members of the Israeli intelligentsia. Leniency toward violence is tantamount to cooperation with the terrorists."

II. "Everyone Is a Target"

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote on page one of the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (9/26): "[Professor Zeev] Sternhell does not give breaks. I can testify to that personally since he was my teacher in the political studies department at the Hebrew University. He does not give breaks to the Israeli right wing either. His articles condemning the occupation, the settlement movement, and the settlers are direct, harsh, and without compromise.... If I am not mistaken, in recent years his writing has become a little more conciliatory. Maybe it is because of his age (he is 73). Maybe it is because of the changes that the political establishment has undergone.... Yesterday morning, a pipe

bomb exploded on the threshold of Professor Sternhell's home in Jerusalem. All signs indicated that the motive for planting the bomb was political.... This story is extremely disturbing. It is disturbing precisely because of its banality. Sternhell does not evacuate outposts, does not cede territory to the Palestinians, or put right wing criminals in jail. All he does is give expression in writing to fairly prevalent views among the Israeli public, including the highest ranks of government. If he is a target, then almost anyone who does not think like an extreme right winger could be a target. Everyone is under threat."

### III. "The Moderate Settlers Are the Problem"

Prominent liberal author A. B. Yehoshua wrote on page one of the popular, pluralist Maariv (9/26): "We see all the time that violence on the part of settler fringe groups has gained momentum over the past year while the moderates among the settlers, law-abiding among themselves, make no serious effort to neutralize these extremist acts. The problem in this case is not only the legal authorities, which, perhaps, attempt to prevent embarrassing acts of this sort. The problem is more with the relatively moderate settlers who live in the dozens of settlements, who certainly reject such acts, but do not come out particularly strongly against them and do not condemn the extremists in their community. We ought to remember that since the state was established, three Jews have been murdered by members of the right wing. I think that this incident shows that things can only get worse as signs of an approaching peace treaty increase. These acts were intended to sabotage any possibility of reaching a peace agreement and the extremists are sending warning signals to anyone who wishes to compromise. The fact that some people are not frightened by those warning signals makes the extremists even more extreme and dangerous.... In order to eradicate such occurrences, we depend mostly upon the unequivocal stand of the Yesha Council of Jewish Settlements in the Territories and the right-wing parties, which must be more firm in condemning these people who gather beneath the surface, and at the same time provide all possible assistance to the police in order to find them before it is too late. The left wing needs to continue to give massive support to the process of dividing the land, which most of the nation supports today. This incident is a warning light that has been lit, and therefore we all must understand the real danger that faces the entire system."

### IV. "Delusional Fringes"

The nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe editorialized (9/26): "The terror attack at the entrance of Prof. Zeev Sternhell's residence should serve as a warning that a low-intensity civil war might erupt between radical groups in Israeli society. Many people on the Right feel that radical left-wing Jewish groups have gone too far and caused national damage. Thus, there have been attempts to expose the deeds of some left-wing organizations in order to attack them at the public level. 'Peace Now' is definitely one of those organizations. But this attack has caused tremendous public damage to the fight against 'Peace Now' and other movements surrounding it.... Prof. Sternhell is indeed a man of the Left, but he has no relation to any left-wing organization. He is first and foremost an intellectual ... harming him is first and foremost an attacking against what he symbolizes: freedom of thought, freedom of expression, and the willingness to endanger oneself for one's positions. It should be assumed that all this characterization of Sternhell's values as a distinguished member of academe does not interest the perpetrators. Their act is worthy of universal condemnation. It endangers Israeli society and harms those trying to fight a legitimate battle against radical left-wing organizations."

### 12. Iran:

#### Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Hope now rests with the U.S. and the EU to act swiftly, decisively, and independently to ratchet up their own sanctions efforts, and to apply their own severe pressures. With French President Nicolas

Sarkozy as EU president, now is the time."

Block Quotes:

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"Iranian Impasse"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (9/26):  
"Two notions must be dropped if the Iranian regime is to be dissuaded from acquiring nuclear weapons.... The first is the persistent belief in the power of transformative diplomacy. The time for polite diplomatic exertions in response to the looming Iranian threat is long past... Nothing has been done so far to give the Iranian regime a compelling reason ... to stop its relentless push for the bomb. Yet it must be stopped. So if military intervention is to be avoided, a second -- and increasingly flimsy -- notion must be altogether abandoned: the idea that the UN is the sine qua non of legitimate action in the international arena. Hope now rests with the U.S. and the EU to act swiftly, decisively, and independently to ratchet up their own sanctions efforts, and to apply their own severe pressures. With French President Nicolas Sarkozy as EU president, now is the time. The stakes couldn't be higher -- for Israel in particular (though by no means for Israel alone). For at the very moment Ahmadinejad denies Iranian ambitions to build nuclear weapons, he simultaneously reiterates their intended objective -- to see Israel wiped off the map."

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